**10b Page 120 AUDIOSCRIPT**

Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

2.22

Different people’s diets rarely surprise me these days. We didn’t use to think so much about what we ate. But today, well … we live in an age where people are just very conscious of their diets. A day hardly ever passes without a story in the news about a particular food that’s good for your health or bad for you if you eat too much of it.

So I was very interested to read a story the other day about the diet of the Nochmani tribe of the Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean. People used to think that these tiny islands – which are about 600 miles from the coast of India – that they were uninhabited by humans. But in 2004, aid workers in helicopters spotted some tribespeople on a mountainside.

Scientists were particularly surprised that there were inhabitants there, because people usually need mammals – you know, cows, goats and so on – and their produce – meat, milk, etcetera in order to live. But the Nicobar islands have almost no mammals. So what were the Nochmani surviving on? Fish, perhaps? No. Amazingly, their diet consisted largely of insects, in particular beetles, of which there were over 1,700 varieties on the islands, but also other insects including spiders.

This presented a problem for the aid workers, who’d brought with them standard survival meals, including chicken, beef and pork. The Nochmani, who weren’t used to eating meat at all, were disgusted by these offerings. All they’d take from the aid workers were sweets and cakes. It wasn’t just a matter of taste either. If you’re used to a certain type of food – even insects – other types may be completely indigestible.

Insects are in fact very nutritious: high in protein and fat and low in carbohydrates, making them an ideal food source for humans. But what was even more amazing was that just as we usually help our animals to live by providing food for them, so the Nochmani cultivate certain fungi and mosses to attract and feed the insects they eat. Perhaps we can learn from this tribe. If more of us could get used to eating unconventional foods such as insects, it might help the world’s food problems.

Life